Pol 14 Viets (342)

Department of State TELEGRAM

XR Pol 1 Viets

30

CONFIDENTIAL 984

Saigon 1185 1-28-70

EXCISE E

PAGE 01 SAIGON 01185 261133Z

18-10
ACTION EA-11

INFO OCT-01 SS-20 PM-03 NSC-10 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00
INR-06 PRS-01 RSC-01 RSR-01 /054 W
125564

R 261020Z JAN 70
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6371
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Szuberg DATE 1/26/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 1185

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

PARIS FOR VN MISSION

SUBJECT: ELECTORAL STRATEGY DISCUSSED BY PRESIDENT'S FRONT

1. ON JAN 22 THE NATIONAL SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT (NSDF) HELD LENGTHY SESSION WITH PRESIDENT THIEU TO DISCUSS STRATEGY FOR FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS. FOLLOWING WAS OBTAINED FROM [redacted] WHO WERE PRESENT. b-1 ed

2. WITH REGARD TO PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, THIEU INDICATED HE INTENDED TO PROPOSE AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION BILL TO PROVIDS THAT COUNCILMEN RUN AT LARGE FROM WHOLE PROVINCE. THIS INTENTION WAS GENERALLY APPROVED BY PRESIDIUM MEMBERS, SINCE IT WOULD MAKE EASIER EXCLUSION COMMUNIST OR CRYPTO-COMMUNIST CANDIDATES AND IT WAS THOUGHT DESIRABLE THAT COUNCILMEN CONCERN SELVES WITH INTEREST OF PROVINCE AS WHOLE RATHER THAN WITH INDIVIDUAL CONSTITUENCIES. COMMENT: FROM POINT OF VIEW VN'S DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT HOWEVER THE DECISION MAY BE REGARDED AS RETROGRADE. COUNCILMEN ELECTED FROM SMALLER CONSTITUENCIES WOULD BE MORE

32

CONFIDENTIAL

Department of State **TELEGRAM**

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 01185 261133Z

RESPONSIVE TO THEIR ELECTORS. WE HAVE MADE OUR VIEWS KNOWN TO PM KHIEM JAN 22. END COMMENT.

3. MOST PRESIDIUM MEMBERS ASSUMED NSDF WOULD NOT CONCERT ON SELECTING CANDIDATES FOR MUNICIPAL AND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS BUT WOULD ALLOW INDIVIDUAL PARTIES TO GO SEPARATE WAYS. NO DECISION WAS TAKEN. [ ] OBJECTS TO THIS VIEW, AND PLANS RAISE ISSUE AGAIN. HE POINTS OUT THAT CLASH BETWEEN NHAN XA, VNQDD, AND RDV IN SEVERAL I CORPS PROVINCES COULD OPEN DOOR TO AN QUANG VICTORIES. THIS VIEW IS MORE IN LINE WITH WHAT THIEU HIMSELF SEEMS TO BE THINKING. b-1 ed

4. MAIN FOCUS OF MEETING WAS ON SENATORIAL ELECTIONS: DISCUSSION WAS GENERAL BUT ONE CONCRETE DECISION EMERGED: TO INVITE UPPER HOUSE CHAIRMAN NGUYEN VAN HUYEN TO HEAD SLATE WHICH NSDF WOULD SUPPORT.

5. [ ] TOLD US JAN 21 THAT PRESIDENT'S CURRENT THINKING RE SENATE ELECTION STRATEGY WAS TO SUPPORT THREE SLATES - ONE FROM NSDF, ONE HEADED BY CHAIRMAN HUYEN, AND ONE COMPOSED OF GENUINE BUT "RESPONSIBLE" OPPOSITIONISTS. SAID HE HAD RECOMMENDED TO PRESIDENT THAT GVN SUPPORT ONE NSDF SLATE AND ONE NON-NSDF SLATE. [ ] ENVISAGED THREE FRONT SLATES (OR TWO FIFTEEN-MAN SLATES DEPENDING ON ELECTION LAW) IN WHICH ABOUT HALF CANDIDATES WOUGD BE FROM OUTSIDE NSDF. HA THUC KY ALSO THINKS NON-FRONT CANDIDATES WILL HAVE TO BE INCLUDED ON FRONT SLATES. APPEARS FROM ALL THIS THAT FCONT MEMBERS ARE NOT VIEWING SELVES AS EXCLUSIVE ELECTORAL CLUB. b-1 ed

6. WHILE IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER PRESIDENT THIEU WILL USE FRONT AS ONLY CHOSEN INSTRUMENT OR WILL GO OUTSIDE IT, THER IS EVIDENCE OF INCREASED PRESIDENTIAL INTEREST IN THE ORGANIZATION. [ ] SAID THIEU HAS INCREASED HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO NSDF IN LAST TWO MONTHS. b-1 ed

BUNKER

CONFIDENTIAL

[redacted]